

**Security Council**

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Identical letters dated 31 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Armed terrorist groups, some of which the United States of America and its allies like to refer to as the "moderate armed opposition", committed yet another crime in Aleppo city using chemical weapons, which are internationally prohibited. The terrorist organizations exploited the cessation of hostilities, which the Syrian Arab Republic respected for nearly two weeks, to once again use chemical substances. On 30 October 2016, those organizations committed a criminal and terrorist act when they fired shells armed with chlorine gas at the 1070-apartment area and the Hamdaniyah residential neighbourhood of Aleppo city. This criminal act of aggression caused 48 civilians and soldiers to experience suffocation.

In keeping with its desire to make the international community aware of the crimes that the terrorist groups continue to commit because of the encouragement of certain States and the silence of others, the Syrian Arab Republic would like to draw the attention of the international community to the following painful facts:

During the past three days alone, terrorist organizations have fired more than 50 Grad rockets and 30 gas cylinders, using what are known as hellfire cannons, from eastern Aleppo and other locations at the western part of the city. The bombardment killed 84 persons, mostly women and children, and caused 280 persons to suffer various injuries. This is not to mention the heavy damaged that was caused to public and private property. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has assembled a team to investigate this criminal use of toxic gases in accordance with international practice. Syria will also inform other international organizations of the outcome of the investigation.

Since the terrorist organizations began escalating the situation in Aleppo over the past few weeks, hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed in western Aleppo, while thousands of others were displaced from that part of the city. Meanwhile, those terrorist groups have been committing countless crimes in eastern Aleppo, which has been cut off from the world by the terrorists.

The Western States have defended the crimes committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Nusrah Front, and the use of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations. Instead of accusing the terrorist organizations, particularly



the Nusrah Front and other groups to which they refer as the "moderate armed opposition", those States have consistently accused the wrong party and absolved the terrorist groups of responsibility for these crimes.

Syria condemns the use of chemical weapons by any party. The unjust and misleading campaign that certain Western States are waging against Syria must be directed instead against the terrorist organizations and those who, for sordid political ends, support them and assist them in obtaining toxic substances.

The Syrian Arab Republic has provided detailed information about States that are complicit in the transfer of toxic substances to terrorist groups. Those States include, in particular, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. This is not to mention the covert involvement of certain Western States, which have provided the terrorist groups with toxic substances and lethal weapons. The involvement of those States, in particular France, the United States of America and Britain, has been revealed in statements by their officials. They have not been bashful about declaring their support for the terrorist, takfirist and Wahhabist organizations that kill innocent Syrians, and they protect the terrorists in international forums and in their media, which lack credibility and strive to distort the facts.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the criminal acts that are being committed by the armed terrorist groups confirm the extent of their impotence and their inability to achieve the goals set out by their masters, sponsors and supporters.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its call upon the international community to put pressure on those States that support terrorism to end their support of armed terrorist organizations, including, first and foremost, their provision of toxic substances and arms to terrorist groups. The only purpose of providing such support is to prolong the Syrian crisis and destroy the people and infrastructure of Syria.

Syria calls on all international agencies that are conducting investigations into the use of toxic substances in Syria to present impartial and credible outcomes and reports, and to carry out their work without pressure from well-known States, particularly the United States of America, France and Britain, which have blatantly and shamefully politicized such investigations instead of preserving the authoritativeness and credibility of reports issued by international agencies.

(Signed) Bashar Ja'afari
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Permanent Representative